



February 22, 2022

Washington State Redistricting Commission
PO Box 40948
Olympia, WA 98504-0948

Commissioners of the Redistricting Commission:

Thank you for the many hours that you have devoted to the important task of redistricting in Washington.

As you may be aware, a lawsuit was recently filed alleging that the Redistricting Commission's legislative redistricting plan violates Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. The plaintiffs in *Palmer v. Hobbs* allege that the Commission's approved state legislative map unlawfully dilutes the voting strength of Latino voters in the Yakima Valley region, and that the map approved by the Commission was adopted with discriminatory intent.

While I am named as a defendant in this action, it is clear that the lawsuit is based on decisions made by the Commission. As the redistricting plan that the Commission approved followed months of study and preparation, I trust that it reflects careful consideration of the requirements of the Voting Rights Act. Every citizen of this state, regardless of race or color, deserves the opportunity to meaningfully participate in elections.

The Commission is in the best position to explain and defend the decisions reflected in its redistricting plan. While my office has a limited role in implementing the redistricting maps adopted by the Commission, we had no role in designing the maps. As a result, I intend to take no position on whether the state legislative redistricting plan complies with the Voting Rights Act. That role most naturally belongs to the body charged with designing the state legislative maps in the first place.

I strongly encourage the Commission to intervene in the ongoing litigation in *Palmer v. Hobbs* to defend the maps that it adopted.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Steve R. Hobbs". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steve R. Hobbs
Washington Secretary of State